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In vaccination against a disease such as meningitis, which is by nature of rare occurrence, one may count on the prevention at most of only one to ten cases in each thousand persons vaccinated. It is evident that unless the vaccination is done on a very extensive scale it offers but little chance of materially reducing the prevalence of the disease. Notwithstanding its possible dangers, and the lack of proof that it is efficient, antimeningitis vaccination deserves full consideration as a prophylactic measure, because of the inefficiency of other preventive measures and the terrible consequences of the disease.

It would seem wise at present to approve the vaccination of all who may desire it, in communities where the disease is epidemic, or where an epidemic seems likely to occur, especially of physicians and nurses who are likely to come into intimate contact with cases. The question will often arise whether persons already intimately exposed to cerebrospinal meningitis should be vaccinated and whether there is more chance of protection or of inducing a phase of increased susceptibility. There is ample ground for an honest difference of opinion on the subject; but the burden of proof is apparently on those who assert that there is danger from the "negative phase."

It does not appear advisable at present to attempt to make antimeningitis vaccination compulsory, nor to divert to wholesale vaccination large sums of money, which might otherwise be applied, perhaps with more certainty of results, to the early diagnosis, serum treatment, and hospital care of developed cases.

Wherever antimeningitis vaccination is employed it should be done as an experiment. Careful records should be obtained of each person vaccinated and of the incidence of meningitis among the vaccinated and the unvaccinated population of each community.

DERATIZATION OF RAT-PROOF BUILDINGS.

A note by W. C. Rucker, Assistant Surgeon General, United States Public Health Service.

It not infrequently happens that in rat-proofing buildings rodents are imprisoned. Sometimes buildings which are rat proof in the ordinary sense of the term may become rat infested by the introduction of rodents in freight. In both situations the rodents are protected from their natural enemies, and if the food is sufficient their numbers may increase greatly. In granaries, storehouses, and abattoirs it is frequently very difficult to eradicate them by the ordinary means. The animals soon become trap shy, and while a considerable number may be captured in barrel traps it frequently seems impossible to effect a complete deratization in such a situation.

The ordinary poisons such as arsenic, phosphorus, barytes, and the like, may be contraindicated on account of the danger of impregnating foodstuffs with them. In such a situation, particularly in abattoirs, Danyz virus should not be used, because of its pathogenic action on man. What is required is some agent which will kill the rat that takes it and at the same time will be without danger of poisoning the foodstuff. For this purpose a poison made according to the following formula has been found efficacious: Plaster of Paris, 6 parts; pulverized sugar, 1 part; flour, 2 parts.

This should be exposed in a dry place in open dishes. It is wise to place the dishes in the rat's runway. In order to make the bait more attractive the edge of the dish may be rubbed with a piece of fish or smeared with oil in which sardines have been packed. The plaster of Paris forms a cast in the alimentary canal of the rat, and hence produces death.